7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
Bangchan

*243 • 17 43 Writing on economic change in Thailand since 1850, Ingram points out that soon after the Bowring Treaty (1854) the population of Thailand tended to specialize more and more in the production of one major crop (rice) and a small number of other primary products, selling these products for money, and using the money to buy various articles of consumption. "Money thus came to play an increasingly important role in an economy in which it had formerly been of but minor significance. When Western traders were freed by the Bowring Treaty to put such products as cheap cotton prints on the Thai market, the people bought these products and, if they could not buy they sought a source of money income. Money could most easily be acquired by producing some commodity for the export market. As villages and households turned to the production of money crops, and as they began to purchase bright-colored garments from the traders, the household crafts declined. Cotton fields were perhaps used for rice or abandoned in favor of land suitable for rice. With the money income earned through the export market, the farmer bought the goods he had formerly made for himself."[9] The money economy had brought along its inevitable companion -- credit, which had become accentuated by the fact that Thai rice farmers received their principal incomes only once a year. There has been a tendency to trace the perpetuation of farm indebtedness to farm poverty which is in turn traced to low productivity in underdeveloped areas. While this is

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9. Ingram, op. cit., p. 36.